

REMARKS

Claims 64-84 remain unchanged in the application and stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,766,076 to Pease et al, in view of one or both of U.S. Patent No. 5,762,552 to Vuong et al. and U.S. Patent No. 5,497,479 to Hornbuckle. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections for the following reasons.

As discussed in the previous Amendment, claims 64-84 cover the embodiments of the subject invention that are discussed beginning on page 35, line 16, in conjunction with FIG. 9. In particular, the claimed embodiments cover video gaming systems that facilitate communication with a monitoring, central or remote computer without a communications device known in the industry as a location controller. Instead, the claimed embodiments of the present invention eliminate the need for a location controller through use of combination game/location controller computer that is employed to operate one of the claimed video gaming devices. As recited in the claims, the combination game/location controller computer is not only programmed to execute a game at one or more player stations, but it is also programmed to receive activity data from a number of player stations and/or other separate video gaming devices and generate an information data stream to be sent to the monitoring computer. The activity data generated by each machine includes, for example, amount of currency inserted, player selections, unauthorized opening of money doors, etc. In the preferred embodiments, the information data stream includes not only the activity data but also identification information that identifies to which of the player stations or video gaming devices the activity data pertains.

The foregoing arrangement is particularly suited for use in small gaming establishments that do not have a large number of video gaming machines. Location controllers are known standalone devices that facilitate communications between the remote monitoring computer in a

casino, for example, and a large number, e.g., 100, video gaming machines. Activity data is transmitted by each video gaming device to the location controller, which then formats the activity data into an information data stream that can be sent to the remote monitoring computer. Since the location controller receives activity from many gaming devices, it must also send gaming device identification information to the remote monitoring computer with the activity data. In response, the monitoring computer can send instructions to the location controller to be forwarded to one or more of the gaming devices. In smaller establishments that may only have a handful of gaming devices, one would rather not employ an expensive location controller of the type that is able to accommodate communications with 100 or more gaming devices. The claimed invention overcomes this problem through an inexpensive programming modification to a conventional game computer that allows the computer not only to execute a gaming program but also to serve as a location controller that receives activity data from a plurality of player stations and/or video gaming machines and formats the data into an information data stream to be transmitted to the remote monitoring computer.

As the Examiner acknowledges, Pease et al. discloses a gaming system that in fact employs a prior art location controller arrangement. In particular, the gateway processor 138 serves as a location controller that facilitates communications between a central computer system 106 and plurality of video gaming devices 108a, 108b and 108c. There is no disclosure or suggestion in Pease et al. that the functionality of the gateway processor 138 could be incorporated in a game computer disposed in or connected to one of the gaming devices 108.

However, Vuong et al. also fails to disclose this key feature of the subject invention and in fact, also discloses the use of a conventional location controller. In particular, the system disclosed in Vuong et al. utilizes a network system 16 and a network manager 40, as illustrated

in FIG. 1, which monitor operation of a plurality of game machines 14. The passage referenced by the examiner at column 6, lines 9-28 notes only that one of the game machines 14 can serve as a game server for other of the game machines 14 in which a common game is played at a number of the machines 14. However, the game server is not the same as a location controller and serves a completely different function. In this regard, it should be noted that both the network system 16 and the network manager 40 continue to be used in this variation and one or both serve as the equivalent of a location controller that monitors all activity, not just game play activity, of the various game machines 14. Any suggestion that one of the game machines 14 could also serve as the network manager would come solely from the impermissible use of hindsight through reference to Applicant's own disclosure.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectively submit that Pease et al., Vuong et al. and Hornbuckle et al. clearly fail to establish a prima facie case of obviousness as to any of the claims by failing to disclose or suggest the key feature of the invention. Accordingly, claims 64-84 are patentable and allowable over the prior art of record. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application are therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

By: William A. Blake
William A. Blake
Reg. No. 30,548

JONES, TULLAR & COOPER, P.C.
P.O. Box 2266, Eads Station
Arlington, VA. 22202
(703) 415-1500
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